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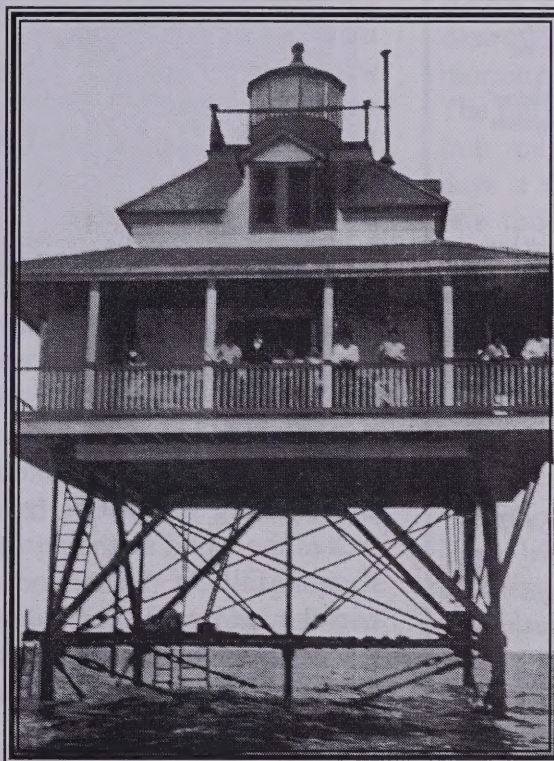
OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

September 2013

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, September 19, 2013, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speakers for the program will be Kerrie Loya, Andrew Nash, and Alvina Nichols of the 100 Men Hall. *Reservations are required* and may be made by calling 467-4090. *Respectfully we must insist that you please call by noon on Wednesday, September 18, 2013, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare.* The price of the lunch is \$10.00.



Pass Marianne
Lighthouse

ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR

October looms, so it's time to begin final plans for the Hancock County Historical Society Nineteenth Annual Cemetery Tour. It will be held on Halloween night, Thursday, **October 31, 2013**, at Cedar Rest Cemetery on Second Street. We will need volunteers to help prepare the cemetery for the tour (mark the path, etc.), to portray citizens buried there, to act as guides, and to serve at the Lobrano House. We also seek donations of cookies, candy, cupcakes, etc. To volunteer, please call the Society at 467-4090.

HISTORIC LIGHT- HOUSES OF THE BAY OF ST. LOUIS

By
Charles Gray

Revised and edited by
Eddie Coleman

Built and maintained by the Lighthouse Service of the United States Coast Guard, lighthouses have safeguarded national shores since 1789 with roots going back to 1716. There were two that marked the entrance to the Bay of Saint Louis:

the St. Joseph's Island lighthouse and the Merrill Shell Bank lighthouse.

St. Joseph's Island

St. Joseph's Island, located south of the Bay of St. Louis, received a lighthouse in 1859. However, the initial appropriations for the lighthouse, which had originally been approved in 1831 and 1834, were transferred to the Merrill Shell Bank Lightship which had been anchored nearby since 1847.

By the time workmen completed the St. Joseph's Island Lighthouse in 1859, they found

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10:00AM — 3:00PM

Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)

MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

that the structure had settled several feet into the muck, which formed the unstable floor of this part of the Mississippi Sound, and that the island was rapidly washing away. It didn't really matter, however, because the island never belonged to the government, a minor oversight in planning. In 1861 before a settlement for land title could be negotiated, another and much larger land dispute interrupted negotiations—the War Between the States.

Finally lighted for the first time in 1865, the tower was an almost constant problem. The timber foundation which had been laid in 1864 to reinforce the tower had sunk several feet into soft mud. In addition wood-boring sea worms had attacked the wood so that by 1867 it was full of holes and the Lighthouse Board predicted that the timbers would require replacement every two years.

Originally, the building rested on nine brick columns, six of which had washed away by 1867. Work to replace them with wooden braces was interrupted by the yellow fever epidemic which swept through the Gulf Coast after the Civil War.

With the island disappearing, in 1868 the structure was moved to a new foundation of nine pilings pounded ninety feet into the mud and excavated as far as possible to be lined with brickwork. Other improvements to save the lighthouse came in the form of a jetty, made from materials salvaged from the old Cat Island Lighthouse tower and fifty-four cubic yards of concrete. This jetty was replaced later by a palmetto log jetty, the palmetto being the only wood which resisted the destructive boring of those pesky sea worms.

Nonetheless, the sea continued to wash the island away



St. Joseph Lighthouse



Lighthouse keeper and family at
St. Joseph Lighthouse

until 1878 when the station was left standing in water. At this time the Lighthouse Board began asking for a new tower. Even in those days bureaucracy worked slowly, and work did not begin on its replacement, the Lake Borgne Lighthouse, until 1889.

One year before the new station at Lake Borgne was completed, the St. Joseph's Lighthouse was condemned. For months the keeper weekly tended an eight-day lantern, rowing his boat to the station from his home in Bay St. Louis. The lighthouse was discontinued on September 1, 1889, the dwelling left as a day mark.

Merrill's Shell Bank

Located between Cat Island, St. Joseph's Island, and Grand Island, Merrill's Shell Bank had buoys after 1829 to guide vessels through the chan-

nel. In 1847 a lightship was anchored there to mark Pass Marianne.

In 1857 the Lighthouse Board asked Congress for permission to build a more permanent structure to replace the rusting lightship. Unfortunately, the initial request was denied, but in 1859 funds were approved for the structure. The lantern was placed forty-five feet above sea level atop a square wooden keeper's dwelling on five screw piles. The station was equipped with one of the two fog signals on the Gulf Coast east of Galveston, a hand-struck bell probably taken off the old lightship. The lantern was lit on August 10, 1860.

In July 1861, Confederate forces removed the lens. Nevertheless, in 1862 the U. S. lighthouse engineer installed a temporary lens, but in 1863 the lighthouse keeper, James Burroughs, was arrested for aid-

ing and abetting the enemy, and his assistant was fired for "chronic insobriety." Ultimately the original lens was captured at Bay St. Louis in 1863, repaired, and replaced in 1866.

However, a fire on the shingle roof, probably from the station's stovepipe, completely destroyed the building on the morning of September 6, 1883. The only remnants were the five iron piles. Within forty-four days a new station was rebuilt, this time with a fireproof slate roof. This structure survived several hurricanes, was automated in 1932, and was discontinued in 1945.

The words most often used to describe life as a lighthouse keeper are "lonely" and "monotonous." At the secluded Horn Island Lighthouse, off the Mississippi Coast south of Pascagoula, one Coast Guard Chief Boatswain's Mate commented, "Few people even remotely realize what isolation means to the men living under restricted conditions, such as prevail on these lighthouse stations. Unless adequate measures are taken to neutralize the ill effects it has on the men, rancor, hostility and even enmity of the most serious nature may result. The record of the Lighthouse Service over a period of years reveals cases of friction, violence and insanity among keepers who have inadvertently been too long isolated." He recommended that the service guard "against avoidable idleness of minds and hands."

Many lighthouses were family stations which, while alleviating loneliness for the keeper,

did little to aid the wife. At least the men folk were able to visit civilization every month or so to pick up supplies; the wives were not. Unfortunately this arrangement resulted in the loss of at least two entire families in Gulf Coast hurricanes.

Of paramount importance was the light to guide vessels to safety or away from danger. To a sailor, the light was a comforting glow on the horizon; to the keeper, it was at times a symbol of despair.

SOURCES:

Cipra, David L. *Lighthouses, Lightships, and the Gulf of Mexico.*

Alexandria, VA: Cypress Communications, 1997.

The Historian of Hancock County. Newsletter of the Hancock County Historical Society, August 1990.

United States Department of Transportation and United States Coast Guard. *Lighthouses & Lightships of the Northern Gulf of Mexico.* Washington, D. C.: U. S. Printing Office, 1976.

Did You Know This about Hancock County?

By
Scott Bagley

Did you know that during for almost thirty years Hancock County had two public gardens on the Jourdan River that drew visitors from all over the country and several foreign countries? Both Darwood Gardens and Holly Bluff Gardens were gems of beauty that stood for several years as prime repositories of the area's flora and fauna.

Darwood on the Jourdan

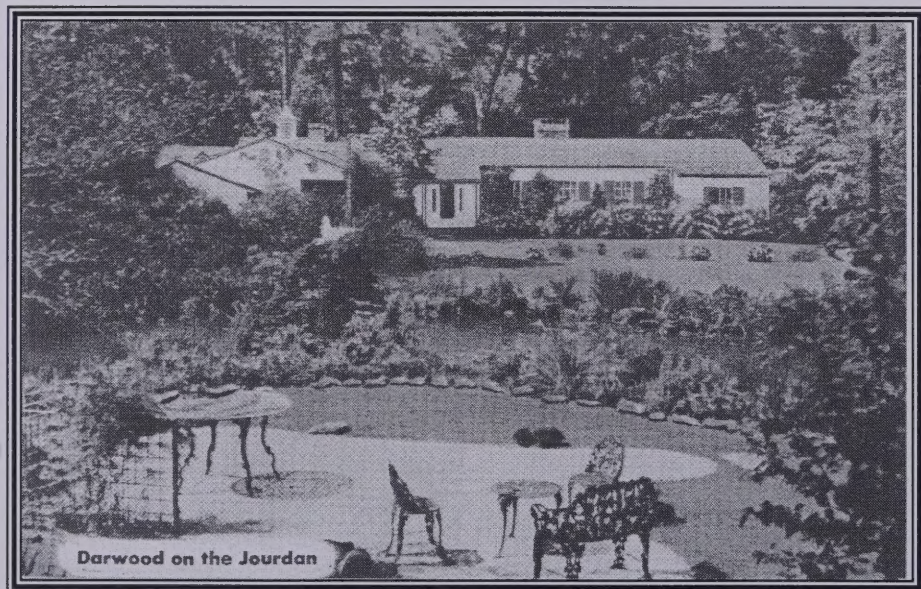
During the late 1930's, Dr. Emmett Lee Irwin, a prominent New Orleans surgeon, purchased about six hundred acres of virgin woodland extending about a mile along the south bank of the Jourdan River and built a home. On about fifty acres of this property,

Dr. Irwin fulfilled a lifelong dream by creating a subtropical garden on the property eventually known as "Darwood on the Jourdan." When it was completed, visitors entered through wrought iron gates and drove along the outer fringes of the wooded park, arriving at a second set of gates where they would park their cars and continue on foot. A mile and a half of footpaths wound their way through the garden's fascinating flora exhibits.

Darwood was known particularly for its many varieties of camellias. There were twenty varieties of the rare Chinese species, *Camellia reticulata*, capable of producing blooms eight inches across. The garden also contained hydrangeas, spirea, azaleas, red yuccas, red spider lilies (popularly known as "naked ladies,"), several types of bamboo, tung, crape myrtle, wisteria, mimosa, gardenias, blueberries, huckleberries, and wild sweet olive—over 150 different kinds of native shrubs and plants. Dogwoods and towering pine trees were all over the property.

A completely enclosed picnic pavilion called the "rough house" was located right at the center of Darwood. It had a large fireplace, table, wicker chairs, a barbecue pit, a kitchen, and rest rooms. A patio lay at the rear of the pavilion.

Dr. Irwin's house on the property was a veritable treasure house of antiques, heirlooms, and mementos of many lands and many years. Included within the collection was the second edition of the Colt pistol, the first pistol to fire a tapered cartridge, as well as



Darwood on the Jourdan



shell casings from Chateau Thierry and Verdun, sites of World War I battles.

Holly Bluff Gardens

Holly Bluff Gardens was a creation of James L. Crump, a New Orleans cotton broker who retired in Hancock County in the early 1940's. While known also for his experimentation with highland rice and the development of Braford cattle, Mr. Crump's proudest achievement was his famous gardens. Reachable from Highway 90 by way of Kiln Road, Holly Bluff Gardens were well marked by signs and were open to the public all year long. Located on the right bank of the Jourdan River, the name was taken from the great Southern Hollies that grew on the river's sandy bluff.

Two miles of pathways wound among ancient live oaks draped with Spanish moss, towering pines, gnarled cypress, maple, and gum trees with dogwood,

wild plum, and hollies from England and China blended with the native variety. Depending on the time of year, visitors would be welcomed with blooms from Cherokee roses, wisteria, wild cherry, azaleas, camellias, spirea, mountain laurel, ardesia, iris, and gardenias.

Along one path was a statue of Louis IX of France, for whom Bay St. Louis and its adjacent body of water were named. Mr. and Mrs. Crump brought this statue to the gardens from France. Also in the gardens was the "Little Museum," containing articles collected by the Crumps during a lifetime of travel. These objects included Etruscan, Grecian, and Roman pottery and clay objects dating back to the fifth and sixth centuries; bronze figures from excavations along the Mediterranean; sparkling rare glassware from Germany; and Meissen and other delicate porcelain from China.

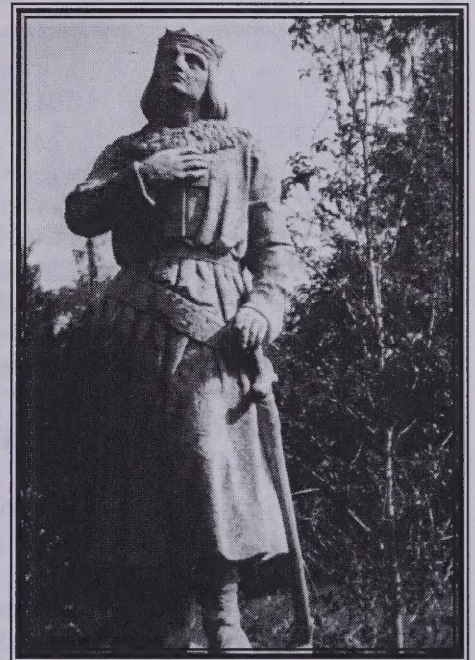
The Crump's home was a rustic log cabin style lodge made of logs brought from the swamplands along the Pearl River. Forty-eight

foot long cypress beams supported thousands of hand-hewn cypress shingles to form the roof of the lodge.

Unfortunately both of these gardens were all but destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Flooding along the Jourdan River and the influx of salty water up into the river worked their toll upon the many varieties of plant life that had thrived there. While the sites remain an amazing and beautiful locale on the river, the extensive gardens, for the most part, are but a memory.

SOURCE:

Scharff, Robert G. *Louisiana's Loss, Mississippi's Gain*. Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Publishing Corp., 1999.



Statue of Louis IX of France
which stood on the grounds of
Holly Bluff Gardens

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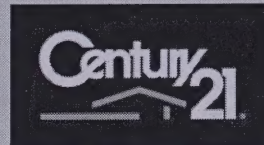
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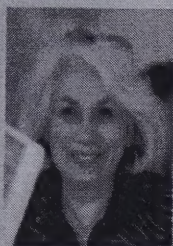
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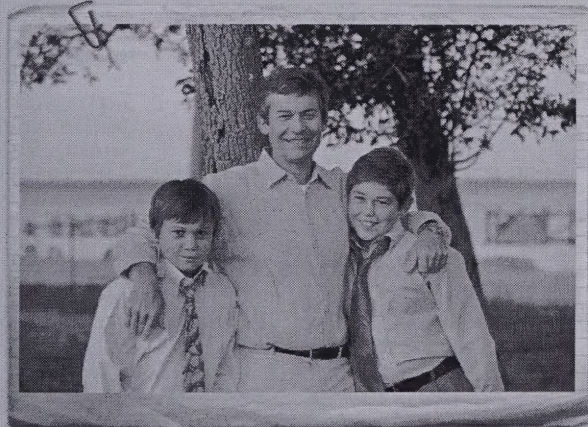
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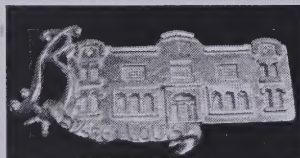
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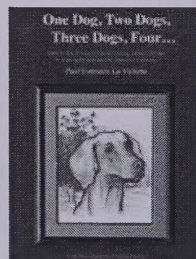


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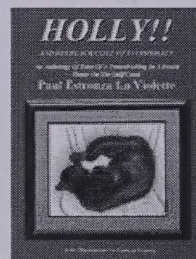
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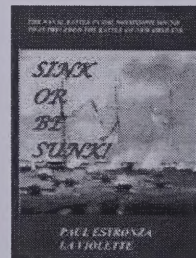
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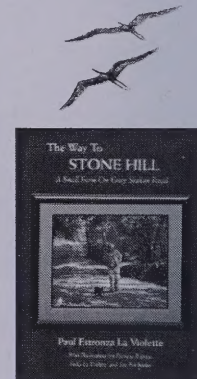
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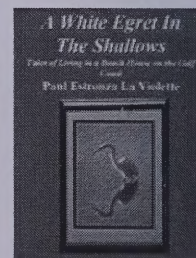
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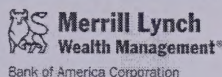


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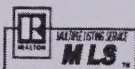
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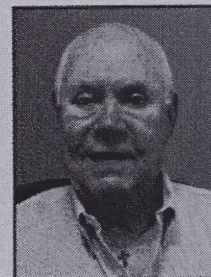
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